2008 FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION Ontario Public Service, Volume 10

diverse Ontario

diverse OPS

Ontario

MESSAGE

from the Secretary of the Cabinet

Dear Premier:

I am pleased to submit the *2008 OPS Framework for Action* report on the theme of diversity.

We recognize that racism and discrimination exist in the OPS, just as they unfortunately do in our broader society. Acknowledging a problem is the first step in tackling it. And we are doing both.

Taking action on diversity issues is a key business priority both for the people we serve and for the people we employ and it is something the senior leadership of the OPS has committed to. This is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do.

Embracing diversity will strengthen the OPS. It will improve the work environment for all of us, it will enrich the pool of talent available to help us modernize services, and it will position us well to face the emerging challenges of the 21st century. This is a journey, not an event. We've begun this journey already and – as I was passionately reminded by a colleague at a Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services diversity forum that I recently attended – we already have some success stories to celebrate which you can read about in this Framework. But we have more to do.

I know that when we in the OPS put our minds and hearts into tackling issues together, opportunities are created and challenges are met. Yet I understand, particularly for those who feel that this organization has not "walked the talk," that we will be measured on our actions, not just our words.

We will be bold, we will be persistent, and we will meet this challenge. By working together, we will become a leader in diversity.

Shelly Jamieson, Secretary of the Cabinet

//intra.secretaryofthecabinet.gov.on.ca

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"We are building a culture of diversity. Respect, inclusiveness and fairness must be part of everything we do - how we treat the public and how we treat each other."

Shelly Jamieson, Secretary of the Cabinet

INTRODUCTION: *Embracing Diversity*

Diversity is fundamental to a modern OPS.

This *Framework for Action* report focuses on how we are striving in many different ways to achieve an inclusive, respectful, fair and discrimination-free public service that reflects and responds to the public we serve.

The cultural change we are aiming for will not happen through a single event or initiative. It will require diligence, determination and sustained effort over time.

It will require an engaged, innovative workforce that embraces its diversity. This is critical to our success as a modern public service and is an area where we have not kept pace in our modernization efforts.

This cultural change will require us to reflect and understand Ontario's diverse population in order to provide the most effective policies, programs and services.

To serve all Ontarians well, we need to respond to the diversity of a population in which, for example, more than one in four was born outside of Canada and one in seven has a disability.

To recruit and retain the best and the brightest – competing against the private and public sectors in a tight labour market – we need to tap into the talents of a diverse Ontario workforce. As the OPS loses an increasing proportion of its existing workforce to retirement in the next few years, we must be an employer of choice for new professionals from the global talent pool.

To engage our workforce and develop the full potential of every employee, we must provide career opportunities and a work environment that encourages the best from everyone. We must welcome people with different backgrounds, orientations, skills and experiences.

As a modern public service, respect for diversity must be second nature, part of our everyday culture. Embracing diversity is a way to improve public services and to make the OPS a better place to work for everyone.

OPS VALUES

Trust
Fairness
Diversity
Excellence
Creativity
Collaboration
Efficiency
Responsiveness

Diversity – We celebrate our differences and draw on the strengths and capabilities of all of Ontario's communities. We welcome and respect divergent points of view to inform and enlighten us. We depend on and value each other.

Fairness – We deal with others in an open, impartial and non-discriminatory manner. We ensure that the processes we use and the decisions we make are fair and seen to be fair.

DID YOU KNOW?

Half of the immigrants from around the world who come to Canada settle in Ontario.

- Between 2001 and 2006, **581,000** international immigrants came to Ontario.
- By 2017, visible minorities will make up almost **29%** of the Ontario population.
- Aboriginal people make up almost **2%** of the Ontario population.
- Francophones make up almost **4.2%** of the Ontario population.
- About **1.9 million** Ontarians reported having a disability in 2006 - about **15.5%** of the population.
- The proportion of seniors (65 and up) in the Ontario population is expected to grow to **17.2%** by 2021. In 2007, it was 13.2%.

SO WHAT?

Given this reality we need to ask ourselves what this means for us delivering public services.

DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

In the OPS diversity includes <u>everyone</u>. As such, the dimensions of diversity for us include, but are not limited to:

- age
- gender
- race
- ethnicity
- physical and intellectual ability
- religion
- sexual orientation
- educational background and expertise

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- ***Fairness***
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"Organizational investment in and commitment to diversity is a process – one that is fluid, challenging and potentially time-consuming. But it also has significant benefits, including enhanced organizational ability to attract and retain workers, and to address the needs of emerging client and customer bases. Additionally, workers are more likely to feel motivated and engaged if they perceive that their skills and knowledge are valued."

Report on Diversity: Priorities, Practices and Performance in Canadian Organizations, Conference Board of Canada, 2006, p. 31.

The Diversity
Imperative

Our differences are part of what makes us human, and the diversity of Ontario is part of what makes this province an exciting and dynamic place to live and work. Being inclusive of diversity makes us stronger as an organization – by giving us a business advantage and giving reality to our public service values.

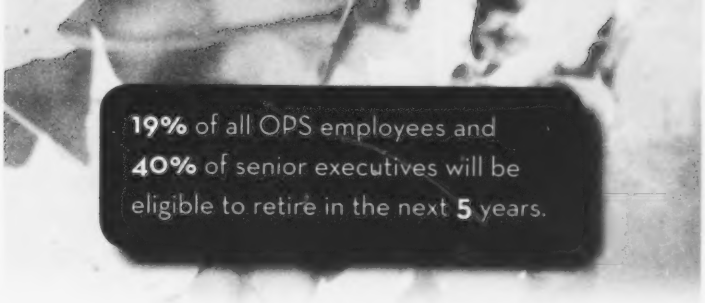
A Business Advantage

The business imperative says that organizations that capitalize on diversity are better positioned to succeed – to provide better services more effectively and to have a more engaged and productive workforce.

Why? Because a diverse organization is better able to recruit the best talent from a diverse population. It fosters new ideas for improving services and responding to the needs of many different communities. It encourages and recognizes the contribution of all its employees. As a society and as a public service organization, we can't afford to waste the potential of anyone because of his or her race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability or any other dimension of diversity.

Diversity is a business advantage, and we have to seize it or be left behind. The private sector has already recognized this because it affects the bottom line. Major progressive corporations are promoting diversity in their workforces to improve their competitive performance. A major report, *The Diversity Advantage: a Case for Canada's 21st Century Economy*, presented by RBC Financial Group at the 10th International Metropolis Conference in Toronto in 2005, said:

"As globalization, technological change, collective human experience and advances in knowledge drive human societies into the 21st century, how successfully Canada continues to manage the challenges of diversity will have an important bearing on the social and economic success of Canada, the quality of our communities and the success of our corporations."



A 2005 European Union conference on The Business Case for Diversity: Good Practices in the Workplace released research that said 83% of organizations believe diversity has a positive impact on their business. These organizations said that valuing diversity helped them recruit and retain high-quality staff, and it has improved their image and reputation.

In Ontario, all employers need to respond to the diversity challenge. Both the public and private sectors are going to be in increasingly fierce competition for the best skills and talent as the Baby Boom generation begins retiring in large numbers within the next 10 years. The competition will not just be local - it will be global, as the working populations in other Western nations age too.

Look at our own organization – 19% of all OPS employees and 40% of senior executives will be eligible to retire in the next five years! We must be an 'employer of choice' in the labour marketplace if we are to renew and revitalize our public service for the 21st century.

This challenge is not only about our workforce – it is about our organizational performance. To understand today's issues and to know how best to meet emerging challenges, we have to be plugged into the variety of networks and communities that are part of today's Ontario. Providing service excellence to Ontarians requires our public institutions and services to be responsive to changing social and community needs. We have to embrace the diversity imperative.

A Moral Duty

There is another aspect to this argument that is particularly important for an organization that serves the public of Ontario. The OPS should be a positive example for doing the right thing. There is a moral imperative to provide a fair opportunity for everyone to realize his or her potential and to be respectful of others. It is only fair and just that organizational practices and our collective and individual attitudes should recognize the value and perspective of every human being.

That means eliminating discriminatory practices, such as systemic requirements that inadvertently block some groups from a fair chance at recruitment or promotion. It means dealing seriously and swiftly with blatant expressions of prejudice and disrespect. It means recognizing our collective blind spots and freeing individuals who don't quite "fit" traditional norms from the boxes we put them in. It also means providing services and treating our customers in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

"The Secretary of the Cabinet must be the OPS's number one champion of diversity. My commitment to diversity is deeply and personally felt. I am determined to make real progress over the next few years towards our vision of a more inclusive and welcoming organization that is diverse at all levels."

Shelly Jamieson, Secretary of the Cabinet

Leading Change:
commitment from the top

The OPS has proven time and time again that we are an organization that can change. We take great pride in the transformation that has occurred in recent years, as we have tackled a host of challenges to respond to the ever-rising expectations of Ontarians for the highest quality and most cost-effective services.

We have turned around situations like the public outcry over delays in birth certificates and set new, higher standards through service guarantees for ourselves and other government service providers to meet.

Diversity is not a new challenge, but it is one that has taken on new urgency. Despite the progress that has been made in law and in social attitudes, discrimination and racism still exist in our society. We have only to look at the last 10 years of human rights complaints in correctional services to know that, despite past efforts, discrimination and racism exist in the OPS and must be addressed.

We had been making progress with discussions that began early in 2007 on the development of a strategic approach to embracing diversity across the enterprise in the new three-year OPS HR Plan. We have also worked closely with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to determine how we can best build the welcoming workplace we all want. Well before that, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) was developing its own action plan. But everyone was brought up short last summer by the incident involving an OPS job applicant who received an email that contained a racial slur. Ongoing issues in MCSCS and in other OPS workplaces make it clear that this is a challenge that we must address across the organization. And as we have with other challenges in the past, we will meet it together.

Last September, the entire senior executive team of the OPS – all Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers – were called together to discuss the diversity challenges facing our organization and to start building the foundations for making diversity a key business imperative of the OPS.

On December 19, 2007, the incoming Secretary of the Cabinet Shelly Jamieson and outgoing Secretary Tony Dean jointly issued a memorandum to all OPS employees which said, in part:

Our vision is to create and sustain an inclusive OPS that is diverse at all levels, welcomes and celebrates diverse talent, nurtures such talent, and in return makes a significant and meaningful contribution to personal and professional development and excellence in public service. Diversity is a key priority and we expect that, within a year, there will be clear results to show for our work.

At the same time, all OPS employees received an outline for a new OPS Diversity Strategic Plan, which sets out how diversity needs to be embedded in our organizational values, culture and strategies.

Accountability

The accountability for progress on diversity will be both high level (senior executive team) and widely distributed throughout the organization.

- The entire senior executive team, Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers, is accountable for leading action on diversity and creating and sustaining inclusive and discrimination-free workplaces across the OPS.
- All OPS managers are expected to demonstrate progress on diversity as a business priority of the OPS.
- All OPS employees are accountable for their behaviour - and must model OPS values.
- A **Diversity Scorecard** with expected outcomes and performance measures will be developed to track progress and measure accomplishments.

Organizational Support

To ensure that we make real progress on diversity across the enterprise:

- The OPS is bringing on board a Chief Diversity Officer as part of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) to drive the Diversity Strategy forward.
- A diversity office will be established under the direction of the Chief Diversity Officer.
- An External Diversity Advisory Committee is being established to get strategic advice from independent, third-party experts and leaders in diversity. This Committee will validate and ensure that the OPS has a robust and credible strategy and implementation plan to deliver results.

Making Progress

Some momentum has already been generated by:

- Development of a Diversity Mentorship Program, which will sensitize Deputy Ministers to the issues, challenges and disadvantages faced by OPS employees from four diversity groups (visible minorities, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, and Gay/Bisexual/Lesbian/Transgendered employees) while allowing those employees to benefit from leadership skills and career guidance from Deputies.
- Development of guidelines for the encouragement and support of diversity employee networks in the OPS, and an OPS Diversity Council made up of representatives of such groups.
- Continuing consultations and dialogue with:
  - Bargaining agents
  - OPS managers and employees.

"The OPS Diversity Strategic Plan will provide a roadmap for change. It will help us embed diversity as a business priority of our organization and create real cultural change. Diversity will be integrated into human resource planning, policy development and business planning for service delivery to Ontarians."

Michelle DiEmanuele, Associate Secretary of the Cabinet,
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services

Driving Change:
OPS Diversity Strategic Plan

Development of the OPS Diversity Strategic Plan is underway. The Diversity framework provides a high-level view of what the Strategic Plan will look like.

The **strategic goals** are:

- To deliver on our business commitments and improve service delivery to the citizens of Ontario through a richly diverse and equitable public service that is reflective of our population and communities.
- To increase our employees' engagement by building an inclusive, respectful, fair, equitable and discrimination-free organization.
- To achieve culturally responsive institutions and practices.

Taking a strategic approach to diversity involves taking a range of actions to drive real cultural change in an organization.

The OPS Diversity Strategy is about:

- Setting the foundation for diversity in the organization with the policies, systems, training and accountability mechanisms needed to strengthen and support it.
- Actively demonstrating a commitment to creating a workforce reflective of our diverse province by using fair and open recruitment and outreach processes to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- Ensuring OPS employees have the supports they need to progress in a fair way in their careers and have an equal opportunity to reach their potential.
- Having OPS senior leaders lead by example by demonstrating through words and action their commitment to diversity.
- Ensuring employees at all levels in the organization have the skills and knowledge to respond to discriminatory behaviour.
- Making the OPS an organization that is welcoming and equitable for all employees, and capable of capitalizing on the strength that its diversity provides to all facets of its business.

The details of the Strategic Plan are being developed in consultation with OPS employees, bargaining agents and external groups.

Action on diversity is linked to the OPS Human Resources (HR) Plan, which is the workforce business plan for the entire public service. Diversity will be fully integrated into the new, three-year OPS HR Plan that starts in 2008-09. There are important HR issues, like how to attract diverse talent to the OPS and how to ensure a diverse senior management team. But if we are going to change the culture of the OPS, action cannot be limited to a Chief Diversity Officer, HR branches or HR professionals alone. This is a challenge for the entire OPS. The organization as a whole must "own" diversity.

	AFTER 1 YEAR	AFTER 3 YEARS
GOALS	• To identify and remove discriminatory barriers preventing fair and equitable employment processes and opportunities. • To increase the representation of diverse groups at all leadership levels. • To change individual behaviours and mindsets.	• To change the organizational culture of the OPS so that diversity and equity are embraced as core values of the OPS.
WHAT WILL THE RESULTS LOOK LIKE?	✔ The OPS Diversity Strategy is a priority for the OPS. ✔ The highest levels of the OPS executive leadership cadre are more diverse. ✔ Racism and all other forms of discrimination are not tolerated and incidents are dealt with proactively and decisively, with consequences imposed where warranted. ✔ Barriers in OPS recruitment processes have been removed resulting in an equitable and diverse workforce at all levels. ✔ Diversity is embedded in Leader-Manager competencies used to drive performance outcomes throughout the OPS. ✔ Equitable retention of diverse staff at all levels of the workforce.	✔ Diversity is a business imperative for the OPS and embraced as an organizational value by all. ✔ The OPS workforce at all levels is representative of the population we serve and includes persons from all traditionally underrepresented groups. ✔ All OPS managers & employees recognize and accept accountability for creating an inclusive, discrimination-free organization. ✔ OPS employment processes and opportunities are fair, equitable and free from bias and all forms of discrimination prohibited by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

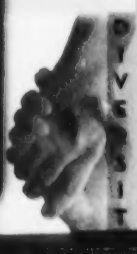
HOW DIVERSE ARE WE?

We want to have a workforce in the OPS that reflects and responds to the diverse population of Ontario and we want our leadership ranks to better reflect this as well. So how diverse are we? The 2007 OPS Employee Survey asked employees to identify if they are visible minority, disabled, Aboriginal or Francophone. Based on self-identification (some people chose not to answer the diversity question) the representation rates in the OPS, compared to Ontario labour force are:

	OPS Workforce	Ontario Labour Force
Members of visible minorities	13%	18.1%*
Francophones	7%	4.9%*
Persons with disabilities	6%	10.7%**
Aboriginal persons	2%	1.4%*

The 2007 Employee Survey does not provide a full picture of diversity in the OPS. In the next survey in 2009, we will ask for more information, through self-identification, to fill in more details.

* Statistics Canada, 2001 Census: share of respective population (age 15+) in the labour force as a proportion of the entire population in the labour force (age 15+). ** PALS 2001: Ontario's total adult population (age 15-64) with disabilities as a percentage of the total Ontario adult population (age 15-64).



"In an ideal world, I am working myself out of a job. In the real world, becoming a diversity-savvy organization is a journey, not a destination and engaged employees will help move us along."

Derek Lett, Special Advisor on Diversity to Associate Secretary of the Cabinet and Deputy Minister, MGCS

Engaging
a diverse workforce

Our people are the foundation of this organization. Engaging 67,000 OPSers in meeting the diversity challenge gives us our best chance of success. All OPSers should be engaged in their work, feel they belong, and have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Derek Lett, Special Advisor on Diversity at the MGCS says: "The OPS can learn from progressive private sector companies who have made diversity a priority for several years. One of the ways in which these diversity leaders have engaged their employees is through encouraging and supporting employee networks." Some OPS employees are ahead of the curve – they have already started to organize their own networks. "The OPS is responding," says Lett. "As an organization, the OPS must tap into these groups to help us become more diversity-savvy."

Employee Networks Can Make a Difference

Employee networks are voluntary, employee-driven associations organized around shared interests, issues and a common bond or background.

Their value to an organization is two-fold. They can offer opportunities for individuals to support each other, share experiences, provide advice and address unique member concerns. They can also contribute perspective and community intelligence to inform policy development and service delivery improvement.

The Black Ontario Public Servants group, known as BOPS, began some time ago as an informal group of colleagues getting together to socialize, share stories and professional and career advice, and generally support each other. BOPS is in the process of becoming a more formalized group.

BOPS town hall meeting November 2007

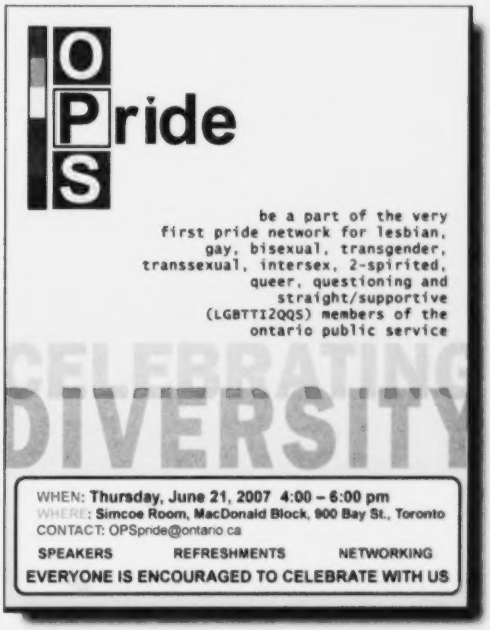
Last November, BOPS organized and hosted a Town Hall meeting attended by close to 400 members, with the former Secretary of the Cabinet Tony Dean and Michelle DiEmanuele, Deputy Minister of MGCS and Associate Secretary of the Cabinet. Members talked publicly of their personal encounters with racism. The group called on OPS leadership to create a more inclusive culture, ensure fair access to opportunities in senior management, and focus on clearer accountability for managers.

The OPS Pride Network was launched on June 21, 2007. Its mission is to create a more inclusive public service environment with respect to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues in the workplace, to support professional development of OPS employees, and provide social activities to foster a sense of belonging.

At the OPS HR Symposium last November, the theme of the OPS Pride Network booth – "Being Yourself at Work" – communicated a lot about what this group of employees is trying to achieve in the work environment.

"By being visible, the OPS Pride Network will ensure that the OPS is a welcoming workplace for all its employees, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, and help position the OPS as a world leader on diversity issues," says Richard Belzile, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, lead of the OPS Pride Network communications team.

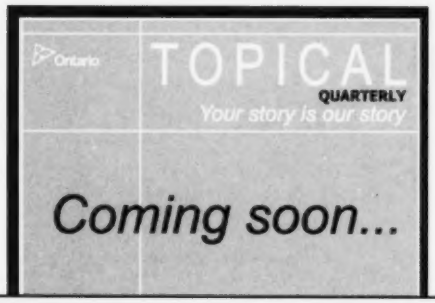
Selma D'Souza, Richard Belzile and Sue Sneyd with Honorable Mention Award received for their work with the OPS Pride Network at the HR Symposium


OPS Pride
be a part of the very first pride network for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, 2-spirited, queer, questioning and straight/supportive (LGBTTI2QQS) members of the ontario public service
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
WHEN: Thursday, June 21, 2007 4:00 – 6:00 pm
WHERE: Simcoe Room, MacDonald Block, 900 Bay St., Toronto
CONTACT: OPSpride@ontario.ca
SPEAKERS REFRESHMENTS NETWORKING
EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO CELEBRATE WITH US

Poster promoting first OPS Pride Network meeting

The OPS is developing principles and operating guidelines for formal recognition of employee networks. Representatives of these groups will sit on an OPS Diversity Council which will meet regularly with the Secretary of the Cabinet, the Deputy Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the OPS Chief Diversity Officer.

These groups will provide important benefits to the OPS as a whole. They will help to create an inclusive and supportive culture in the OPS and attract, retain and engage talented and diverse employees. They will enable employees to serve as strategic partners with management and contribute to the business goals of the OPS. They will also improve communications by sensitizing management to employees' concerns and creating internal awareness.



STAY TUNED

Topical's March 2008 edition will provide contact information for the BOPS and OPS Pride networks as well as new and emerging networks. Stay tuned - find out how you can get involved.

ARE SOME OF US MORE OR LESS ENGAGED?

Highly engaged employees like their job, are committed to, and proud, of their organization. They strive to do their jobs well and achieve results for their organization. The overall employee engagement index in the OPS is reasonably good and increased slightly from about 65 in 2006 to about 66 in 2007.

The 2007 OPS Employee Survey asked employees to self identify if they are visible minority, disabled, Aboriginal or Francophone. The results showed that:

- Engagement of visible minorities is in line with the OPS average.
- Persons with disabilities are significantly less engaged than the OPS average.
- The engagement of Aboriginal employees is about average.
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The next OPS Employee Survey in 2009 should give us an indication of how successful the OPS Diversity Strategic Plan and Employee Engagement action plans have been in improving how employees feel about the organization and their role in it.

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> ***"It will take time, but it is only through our actions, our leadership and an unwavering commitment to succeed that we can attain a healthy and diverse workplace in which everyone can make a contribution and be respected."***
>
> Deborah Newman, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, MCSCS Deputy Dialogues, Spring 2007

Recognizing
the challenge

Research into organizations that are making progress on diversity has revealed that one of the key factors is recognizing what you are up against. An organization called TWI Inc. developed a diversity continuum. Organizations at the top are diversity leaders who are making real progress. At the bottom, are employers that refuse to believe or acknowledge that there is any unfairness in their organization. They are not getting anywhere.

An example in the OPS where the organizational change agenda openly recognizes problems and pursues action-oriented, employee-centred solutions is the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS). A systemic change agenda to advance diversity and human rights is being embedded throughout the ministry. The initiatives that are being implemented are both internally and externally focused – they affect employees in very direct and positive ways, and they also focus on improving services.

Advancing Diversity and Human Rights in MCSCS

"Serving all of Ontario's diverse communities to keep our province safe."
Mission of the MCSCS

Nobody says it's going to be easy.

But a ministry that has struggled with workplace conflicts that have ended up in human rights tribunals, court orders, grievance settlement board rulings and media headlines is determined to turn a corner. Its senior management has set a course to becoming a leader in the Ontario government in advancing diversity and human rights.

The MCSCS is the largest ministry in the OPS. It has almost 17,000 employees. More than 7,000 are correctional employees, 8,000 are with the Ontario Provincial Police, and about 1,500 are community safety and corporate staff.

Because of past complaints by correctional employees of racism and sexism that remained unresolved for many years and some issues that cry out for resolution, the ministry has zeroed in on making improvements in correctional services. What is happening now in corrections is part of an overall ministry transformation that has made achieving "healthy, diverse, and effective workplaces" a key business priority.

"There is no place for racism and it will not be tolerated," says Deputy Minister Deborah Newman. "I am encouraged by my discussions with ministry staff who support and welcome the need to make these changes."

"We are not there yet, by any stretch," says Fiona Crean, Assistant Deputy Minister for Organizational Effectiveness, a specialist in human rights and organizational change who joined the ministry a year ago. "We continue to have serious workplace issues. But we have strong leadership that is committed to change and a wide-ranging action plan. The foundations for real progress are in place."

The ministry's framework for human rights and systemic change has three major planks:

- Workforce revitalization – Engage, recruit, retain, develop and promote qualified employees from across all segments of society.

- Values in action – Advance and integrate leadership that values human rights, participation and inclusion at all levels of the organization.

- Systems – Implement policies and practices that are inclusive, fair, equitable and transparent.

Crean says there has to be action on all these fronts concurrently. "If you reach out to diverse groups through recruitment and promotion strategies, but you don't change workplace conditions to welcome and support people, it won't work."

Another important element is persistence. "You have to sustain these efforts over the long term. We are at the point with many initiatives in our Action Plan where we are just laying the groundwork. We have to follow through and create real changes in the organizational culture."

The ministry is also building on past achievements. For example, there are plans to use the experiences of the Women in Corrections program, which provides networking opportunities for female employees, to develop employee networks to support racialized and Aboriginal employees.

SOME EARLY LESSONS FROM MCSCS

Deputy Minister Deborah Newman shares some early lessons learned from the MCSCS experience. **"I have said to my colleagues: You don't want to go where we have been. But you will want to be where we are going."**

- Drive the agenda from the top relentlessly and continuously.

- Deal with barriers/problems as they come up. Don't delay or deny. It will only get worse.

- Ask labour stakeholders, front-line staff and community groups for their help and their ideas.

- Recognize that there are overt and hidden barriers that have to be dismantled to create an inclusive organization.

- Keep talking about diversity. Listen carefully. Build a continuous loop of learning.

- Align ministry strategy with OPS strategy so they reinforce each other.

- Give managers the awareness, education and tools they need to be accountable for diversity.

Aboriginal representation in corrections raises an important issue to consider. On the one hand, Aboriginal people are over-represented as inmates in correctional facilities and MCSCS wants to see fewer of them. On the other hand, the ministry would like to increase interest among Aboriginal people to work in corrections. Its leadership is working on both.

As Commissioner of Corrections Arnold Galet says: "The face of Corrections is changing right across the country in many ways. With respect to diversity, we are striving for an inclusiveness that results in staff complements that reflect the demographic composition of our communities."

Shkode-Kaan: A Symbol of New Approaches

There is a Shkode-Kaan, an Aboriginal Praying Arbour, on the grounds of the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre that symbolizes how attitudes and practices are changing in Ontario's correctional services. It is the first in a Canadian correctional setting.

The Shkode-Kaan, built in 2006 by staff and inmates, is a place for grieving, meditation and morning Smudging ceremonies, where participants cleanse themselves of negative thoughts and feelings. It is also where programs are delivered to help inmates reconnect with their customs and learn about ways to change their lives.

"The Shkode-Kaan is the centre of spirituality for inmates of all cultures. It is a place where they can go when they are under stress," says Dan Blaquiere, Superintendent of the Correctional Centre and the Thunder Bay Jail. "It has made quite a remarkable change in the way we do business here. Both inmates and staff recognize its value. It has had an impact on both sides of the bars."

With Aboriginal men making up approximately 70% of inmates at the Thunder Bay facility, the senior management team decided in 2004 to make Aboriginal programming and services the primary focus. Offenders from across the province may be sent to the centre for these programs.

Efforts to support staff understanding of Aboriginal culture and to recruit more Aboriginal correctional workers have included support for staff participation at First Nations career fairs; an expanded interview process for job openings that includes a segment on empathy, communication, diversity and ethics; and, assignment of newly hired staff to mentor officers.

Blaquiere notes: "The fact that we are talking out loud about anti-racism, anti-sexism and diversity is a good sign. Now that consciousness has been raised, I think we will see many more changes."

WOMEN EMPLOYEES SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

The Women in Corrections program offers networking and development sessions where female employees can share their experiences, air their concerns, learn about policies, initiatives and issues that affect them, and get to know each other. The sessions draw about one thousand participants yearly.

Correctional services have traditionally been a male-dominated world. Women currently make up 29% of Ontario's correctional officers. "Women can feel isolated," says Marg Welch, Assistant Deputy Minister, Adult Institutional Services and executive lead, Women In Corrections steering committee. "This program is one way of reducing that isolation and showing women that we are proactive about making this a good place to work."

Participants in Women in Corrections program, fall 2007

"Shakespeare wrote that 'action is eloquence'. Our Branch demonstrates that a rich diversity of people, skills and knowledge does drive innovation and excellence in public service. Our staff understand that our diverse range of backgrounds, cultures and experiences enrich us as we work together towards common goals. This worldview is what a modern OPS is all about."

Francis Chan, Manager, Technology and Business Solutions Branch

Valuing
diversity works

EDU/TCU Technology and Business Solutions Branch award winning team

"We work so well together. There are a hundred or so of us. We are from 24 countries around the world, and most came, like me, as adults to Canada," says Soussan Tabari.

The "we" in this case are members of the award-winning Technology and Business Solutions Branch in the Community Services I & IT Cluster serving the Ministry of Education (EDU) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU).

They have been recognized for the quality and innovation of their work. For example, they won a 2007 Canadian Project Excellence (CPEX) award and two merit awards at Showcase 2007. What makes for a winning team? Tabari, Branch Director, attributes part of the branch's success to its diversity. "It brings a richness, a variety of views, experiences and education, which enhances our ability to contribute to the agenda of our ministries."

Job openings in the branch draw anywhere from 250 to 400 resumes. "The supply of skills in the IT field is very much international, especially from South Asia, the Far East and Eastern Europe, which have advanced software development and IT in general," Tabari says.

Tabari, who joined the OPS 27 years ago just out of university, can identify with newcomers looking for a chance in the Canadian marketplace. "Newcomers want to demonstrate what they bring to the table. They also want to advance according to their skills, competencies and merit."

Ian Koster, Senior Manager in the Branch, says: "Having colleagues from so many different countries and cultures makes the world a much smaller place. For example, as major events take place in the world, there is usually someone down the hall from that part of the world. Learning of their experiences gives a different perspective and greater appreciation for the issues that affect the world today. This enables the OPS to better meet the needs of its citizens today."

> ***The Canadian labour force offers a large pool of diverse talent that is under-represented and under-utilized. Harnessing and maximizing this talent offers substantial benefits to organizations in terms of productivity, profitability and competitive advantage."***
>
> *Report on Diversity: Priorities, Practices and Performance in Canadian Organizations*
> Conference Board of Canada, 2006

Reflecting
the Ontario we serve

In the OPS, diversity involves having a workforce that reflects, at all levels, the public we serve.

How do you achieve a diverse workforce that reflects today's Ontario? For a start, you have to reach out, particularly if the community you wish to reflect does not usually respond to traditional channels of recruitment, like newspaper ads about job openings.

Recruiting from Diverse Communities

"Outreach – we live and breathe it!" says Jamesene King, manager of the Northern Recruitment Centre in Sudbury. The Centre, which began as a pilot project three years ago, serves the North Region stretching from North Bay west and from Parry Sound north to the Manitoba border. Outreach is a huge part of what the eight recruitment specialists in the Centre do. "We have a large Aboriginal population in the North, and we have a number of French-language designated communities. So expanding the pool of Aboriginal and bilingual candidates is very important to us," says King.

"We have also been educating ourselves, with the help of local organizations that work with people with disabilities and staff from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, about how to attract people with disabilities to work in the OPS and accommodate their workplace needs."

Outreach involves developing relationships with community groups and agencies and First Nations Band Offices to get the word out about OPS job opportunities and to provide information so they can help prospective applicants prepare for OPS job competitions.

Increasing Fairness for Internationally-Trained Professionals

If Ontario is to capitalize on the skills, knowledge, ideas and global contacts of the tens of thousands of immigrants who come here every year, the pathways into employment for internationally trained workers have to be opened up. Two of the major issues for internationally-trained professionals are:

- being accepted into regulated professions based on their credentials so that they use their skills and knowledge, and
- being expected to have Canadian job experience before they can get in the door of their chosen field.

"The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) has taken steps to increase fairness for internationally-trained individuals seeking entrance to Ontario professions," says Katherine Hewson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration Division.

Ontario's first Fairness Commissioner, Dr. Jean Augustine, was appointed in March, 2007 to monitor the registration practices of 38 regulated professions. The Office of the Fairness Commissioner was created by the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006*, following a review by George M. Thomson, a former Deputy Minister in the OPS and the federal public service.

The Thomson review noted that immigrants seeking entry into their professions in Ontario face several issues, including lack of consistent pre-application requirements, lack of clear and complete information about professional standards and admission requirements, too few opportunities to demonstrate competence, and processes that are often unreasonably slow.

The Fairness Commissioner will assess how the professions are doing through audits and annual reports. Her Office is an independent agency, reporting to the Minister. The Act also established an Access and Resource Centre for the Internationally Trained to provide advice to newcomers and others. The Centre, called Global Experience Ontario, is based in Toronto.

Welcoming International Interns to the OPS

The OPS Internship Program for Internationally-Trained Individuals is helping newcomers get some Canadian work experience and find out if a career in the public service is a good fit for them. The program is the first of its kind by a provincial government in Canada.

The OPS also benefits from interns' knowledge and global experience during the six months of their internships – and perhaps into the future. Of the first wave of interns, 52 of the 72 who completed the program by the summer of 2007 have found full-time professional employment, 32 of them within the OPS.

The Program started in early 2006 as a pilot program of MCI and Career Edge, a not-for-profit organization specializing in paid internships in the employment market.

Ministries, agencies and commissions submit proposals to MCI, describing their potential placements and learning opportunities. The ministry partners with the Youth and New Professionals Secretariat, Centre for Leadership and Learning, with support from Human Resources Service Delivery, in the MGCS. The program is now in its second year, and each year, about 70 interns have been placed.

Alison Konrad, Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario, London, has spoken out about the waste of "human capital" when immigrants are either unemployed or underemployed and cannot use the knowledge, skills and networks they have brought with them to Canada. She also warns of the potential impact on the children of immigrants who are disenchanted with opportunities here.

Rosario Guray moved from an internship with MCI into a full-time job as a business analyst with Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto. Guray came to Ontario in February, 2005 with an impressive resume from more than 10 years in public service in the Philippines. She found some work relatively quickly, while she learned about the Ontario job market. But she was still looking for a position that suited her skills and experience when she was chosen for an OPS internship early in 2007.

"I was lucky to be selected," says Guray. "I was able to use my experience and skills. I finished my assignment early, and my mentor helped me to connect to other people and opportunities." The new job is challenging and satisfying, says Guray. "My family (husband and three children) is doing great. We all appreciate this program for recognizing my potential."

Rosario Guray speaks at MCI staff meeting

> ***Even as the longest journey begins with a single step, so too, the final steps to accessibility for an individual to achieve their potential may depend simply on another person's strong arm, a helping hand and an open mind. I am asking you today, to be that person, to be that role model."***
>
> The Hon. David C. Onley on his installation as Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, September 5, 2007

Improving
accessibility

An important part of becoming an inclusive organization is ensuring accessibility.

For Ontarians with disabilities, the *2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* began a new era in required improvements through regulation. There will be benefits for our customers and our employees.

For Franco-Ontarians, accessibility of French language health services is being tackled through innovative approaches linked to health system transformation.

More Accessible Customer Services

The first regulation under the ground-breaking *AODA*, the Customer Service Standard, took effect January 1, 2008. It will be followed by regulations for accessible transportation, information and communications, built environment and employment.

The *AODA* Customer Service Standard requires organizations in both the private and public sectors to establish policies, practices and procedures for the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities, including use of assistive devices. Reasonable efforts must be made to reflect the principles of:

- respect for the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities,
- their inclusion in the mainstream, unless separate services are necessary, and
- equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services.

The Standard covers such issues as training of staff so they know how to help customers with different disabilities; communication that takes into account the customer's disability; feedback mechanisms for complaints about inadequate service, and use of support persons or service animals.

MAY I HELP YOU?

May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities is an on-line training program that helps OPS employees understand their responsibilities for providing accessible services for people with disabilities. It is available on MyOPS. Go to learning services and search for the course title.

- **10.7%** of the Ontario labour force are persons with disabilities
- **41%** of people with disabilities are employed vs. **76%** of people without a disability
- **6%** of OPSers self-identify as having a disability

OPS Accessibility Leadership Strategy

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has the lead for developing the OPS Accessibility Leadership Strategy. An Accessibility Leadership Committee of ADMs has been established to guide the development of the initial multi-year plan and annual revisions/updates to ensure that it meets the requirements of the *AODA* and the needs of the OPS.

The groundwork done during 2007-08 includes: a review of corporate policies, including HR and employment policies, that have an impact on accessibility; assessment and analysis of OPS intranet sites; and an accessibility audit of representative government buildings. The Macdonald Block at 900 Bay Street, Toronto is getting an accessibility makeover, including the addition of accessible washrooms and elevators that announce the floors.

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Improving Accessibility in French Language Health Services

For Francophones in Ontario, changes in the health care system and in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) have initiated a new approach to equity, accessibility and sustainability of French language health services.

"We are working to ensure that the principles of the *French Language Services Act* are part of local planning and monitoring and that the needs and concerns of Francophones are heard," says Gilles Huot, Provincial Coordinator in the French Language Health Services (FLHS) Office.

Service planning, coordination and resource allocation in health and long-term care are moving closer to the people who deliver care and the people who receive it through the establishment of Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs).

Huot's team has developed a strategy to improve data collection and analysis of service access and accessibility for Franco-Ontarians. Access refers to whether there is a facility offering services within reasonable reach of a designated population (reflecting both supply and demand). Accessibility refers to the extent to which a population in need can use the services (barriers could include economic, cultural, geographic and other issues). The FLHS team won a 2007 Award of Excellence for Services in French for development of its strategy.

The work of the FLHS Office is part of an overall thrust to improve services for Franco-Ontarians and involve Francophone communities in the process. A new French Language Health Services Advisory Council was appointed last November to provide advice on health and service delivery issues.

> ***"Not only should the OPS, as an employer, ensure that it reflects the diversity of Ontario, the public service should reach out and respond to Ontario's diverse communities to ensure that public polices, programs and service delivery meet the needs of Ontarians."***
>
> Shelly Jamieson, Secretary of the Cabinet

Responding
to diverse communities

A diverse workforce provides a real advantage to organizations that can capitalize on their employees' new ideas, different perspectives and varied backgrounds to relate to customers and improve services.

The OPS is working on an **OPS Service Directive** to build on past service quality initiatives and further embed a common service vision, principles and culture across the organization. The Directive will stress the need to understand the changing needs of our diverse customers and be responsive to what the public wants and expects from their public services. It will promote best practices in gaining customer insight, designing, delivering, measuring and improving services.

"The first step in the service process, gaining customer insight, is critical," Angela Coke, Assistant Deputy Minister in the Modernization Division, MGCS, who is leading development of the new directive. "We have to understand our diverse customers' needs, behaviours and satisfaction drivers, and how they want to access our services."

Policy development also requires a sensitivity to diversity. Across the broad spectrum of OPS businesses in all ministries, understanding of and learning from diverse communities will enhance the policy development process.

Kevin Costante, Deputy Minister and Associate Secretary of the Cabinet, Policy, notes: "In our consultations and analysis, we have to be aware of the issues and concerns of diverse communities in order to respond with the most effective policies."

To foster awareness among policy professionals and to provide them with appropriate materials and advice, the OPS-wide Policy Innovation and Leadership (PIL) initiative will be examining its products and tools through a diversity lens. "We are making this commitment," says Costante, who is co-chair of PIL. "We are going to make sure we strengthen the advice, checklists and other tools our policy professionals need to be inclusive and ensure Ontario's diversity is reflected in the policy development process."

rootsofyouthviolence

Not Just Another Public Meeting

Consultation is a key part of the policy development process and one way to reach out to, and engage, diverse communities. For example, how do you involve or gain the trust of people who, based on past experience, have no particular reason to believe that a government initiative will make any difference? That was the challenge faced by the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence initiative when it began its consultations.

The result was not just another public meeting.

The Review is co-chaired by former Chief Justice of Ontario, Hon. Roy McMurtry, and former Speaker of the Legislature, Dr. Alvin Curling, and is supported by a small Secretariat in Cabinet Office. "Our Co-Chairs are determined to hear directly from the grassroots," says Irwin Glasberg, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Secretariat. "They believe strongly that you have to involve youth in the decision-making that affects them. We are trying to model that in our consultations."

The Review set up "community insight" sessions to engage first-hand with community members, leaders and youth in eight neighbourhoods, four in Toronto, and one each in Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Thunder Bay and Ottawa.

"We realized we faced a special challenge in reaching out to diverse communities and that disadvantaged youth would be especially hard to reach," says Jim Cowan, Director of Communications and Consultation. "In many of these communities, youth have not had a lot of good experience with authority. Some people feel that they won't be listened to anyway, so why should they bother? You have to convince them it's worth it."

Rather than the traditional consultation model where a public meeting is advertised in the newspaper or posted on a billboard at a local community centre, the Review hired a person in each neighbourhood to engage their fellow community members and put together a group to meet with the Co-Chairs. That group had to include young people. "The response has been great," says Cowan.

To ensure that all Ontarians have a chance to provide input, the Review also has an interactive website that invites discussion and a toll-free telephone line.

From Queendom Hijabs to Bombay Bounce

How do you foster a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation among young people with diverse abilities, backgrounds and ideas? You provide support – not just financial support to get an idea for a summer business off the ground, but practical support through training and mentoring that will help a young entrepreneur learn and overcome challenges along the way.

The Summer Company program of the Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship is open to students aged 15 to 29. The program is coordinated and delivered at the community level by a network of Small Business Enterprise Centres. The ministry has expanded the reach of Summer Company to youth who were not traditional participants in the program through partnerships with not-for-profit community organizations.

The business ideas emerge from the experience of young people, like Abeer Al-Azzawi of Ottawa, who started a summer business to make funky and functional hijabs for Muslim women, including a line of hijabs for sports. Not limiting herself to retail stores, Abeer marketed Queendom Hijabs through e-commerce to reach international customers for her growing enterprise.

Jesse Whitney of Sundridge started J&F Firewood to supply residents, cottagers and campers. With support from the Business Centre in Nipissing/Parry Sound, he discovered skills he "didn't know he had." The J is for Jesse, who has visual impairment, and the F is for his guide dog Fudge. He planned to continue his business part-time while back at school.

Sajmun Sachdev developed her idea for a company, called Bombay Bounce, offering dance classes to children and adults in Toronto. She had no previous business training, and learned about business setup, insurance, registration, marketing and other entrepreneurial skills.

> ***"It is our blind spots individually and collectively that create the barriers and create the problems in the first place. We unconsciously trap people into boxes by our stereotypes and we need to consciously and literally think outside the box. To address diversity, then, is not about reverse discrimination: it's about addressing a deficit that is created by our collective blind spots."***
>
> Shakil Choudhury, Program Director, Anima Leadership
> "Minority Report" by Melissa Shin, Corporate Knights Magazine, Vol. 6.2, 2007, p. 41.

Conclusion

Diverse Ontario - Diverse OPS - It just makes sense! It will help the OPS to reach the broadest pool of recruits to get the best candidates for our workforce. Creating a more inclusive environment will make working in the OPS better for everyone. Diversity will enable us to improve our policies, programs and service delivery to better meet the needs of the diverse communities of Ontario.

All of us in the OPS can make a difference in big ways and small.

If you are a senior executive, you can use your employee engagement survey results to ask questions and unearth problems. Lead the way by taking action.

If you are a manager and you have an opening for a new recruit or a special assignment, how can you broaden your outreach?

If you work in policy or deliver a program, how might you reach out more effectively and involve diverse communities to improve policy-making and service delivery?

Is the work environment in your unit, branch or division really inclusive and engaging for everyone? If not, what can be done to make it so?

Do some self-assessment. We all have biases. Look at your own biases and think about how they may be influencing your behaviour. What can you do personally to overcome them?

The OPS Diversity Strategic Plan will drive systemic change as a business imperative. But it is up to each of us to make our own work "space" diversity-friendly.

Building a more diverse and welcoming workplace is a journey. The Diversity Strategic Plan will set the direction, and clear, measurable results will keep us focused on where we want to be. Moving forward together, we will make real progress.

TOPICAL

Your story is our story

Continuing the Dialogue: See some questions and answers about diversity on the next page. Also future issues of Topical will feature and respond to your comments and questions on this Framework For Action.

Your Questions About Diversity

One of the keys to success in making the OPS a diversity-friendly organization is shared understanding. We have already heard questions about what it means to make diversity a priority, and what impact the diversity strategy under development will have on our workforce. Here are a few questions and answers to contribute to a constructive dialogue.

Q: Is this another version of employment equity?

A: No. Employment Equity was legislated and focused on changing the representation of designated groups in the workforce through positive affirmative recruitment in response to historic patterns of discrimination. It was intended to benefit designated groups and not necessarily to drive cultural change across the organization.

Diversity, on the other hand, is about culture change, service improvement and equality of opportunity - it benefits everyone inside and outside the organization.

Diversity is strategic, focusing on how to promote innovation and improve public services by drawing on the different ideas and perspectives of our diverse workforce and responding to the needs of Ontario's diverse communities. It involves proactively changing the work environment to ensure that all employees have an equal chance to contribute to their full potential.

Q: Why focus on diversity if this is really about racism?

A: Because diversity is broader than racism. Our Diversity Strategy includes, but is not limited to, anti-racism. While racism in the OPS has been acknowledged as a problem, there are also problems with other forms of discrimination. For example, the OPS Pride Network is calling attention to the need for a more inclusive public service environment with respect to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in the workplace. Another example is the work we still have to do to break down barriers to access for people with disabilities, as employees and customers.

Q: I do not see myself targeted by the diversity strategy. What does it mean for me?

A: It will mean a more welcoming and more inclusive work environment for everyone. If some people are sidelined in our public service because of their colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability – or just because they have a different work style – the environment is diminished for everyone. Managers will need to demonstrate competency in managing a diverse work environment.

Q: Does this mean that certain candidates will have an advantage in job competitions?

A: No preference will be given to any candidate. This is not about singling out any particular person or group. This is about leveling the playing field for everybody. Executive search experts in the private sector note that when everyone has equal opportunity, the best candidate wins.

If you have questions about this Framework For Action, please email us at

modernops@ontario.ca

+ ideas innovation

If you have an idea about how to improve diversity in the OPS, please submit by selecting ***ops ideas online*** *at*

//intra.myops.gov.on.ca

If you want to express your views on this Framework For Action, visit

//intra.secretaryofthecabinet.gov.on.ca

Resources

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    - Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration //intra.mci.gov.on.ca
    - Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services //intra.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca
    - Office of Francophone Affairs //www.ofa.gov.on.ca
    - Youth and New Professionals Secretariat //www.gojobs.gov.on.ca/YNPS.asp

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